

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-34 (canceled)

35. (New) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a tray having a first accommodating section in which the operating portion can be positioned and accommodated;

a lid member which can be selectively set in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating section and in an open state to expose the first accommodating section as a whole with respect to the tray, the lid member having a second accommodating section capable of accommodating the flexible inserting portion.

36. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, further comprising.

an outer lid member to cover the second accommodating section of the lid member which is set in the closed state with respect to the tray.

37. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, wherein the lid member has a positioning portion to accommodate the flexible inserting portion so that portions of the flexible insertion portion do not come into contact with each other.

38. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, wherein the second accommodating section is provided in the surface

of the lid member that is on a reverse side of a surface opposing the first accommodating section when the lid member is in the closed state to cover the first accommodating section.

39. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 35, wherein the vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization is provided such that the flexible inserting portion, which is provided integral with the operating portion that is accommodated in the first accommodating section provided in the tray can be accommodated from a middle portion in the second accommodating section provided in the lid member.

40. (New) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel comprising:

a protecting cover member to cover the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope so as to at least one of prevent the surface of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with the operating portion and prevent surfaces of portions of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with each other; and

a tray having a first guide portion for positioning the operating portion when accommodating the endoscope of which the flexible inserting portion is covered with the protecting cover member and a second guide portion for positioning the protecting cover member through which the flexible inserting portion is passed, thereby making it possible to accommodate the endoscope while having the operating portion and the flexible inserting portion of the endoscope positioned.

41. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 40, wherein the protecting cover member is a cylindrical member having an inner diameter that is larger than the outer configuration of the inserting portion.

42. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 40, wherein the protecting cover member is provided with flexibility.

43. (New) A vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization for accommodating an endoscope having a flexible inserting portion and an integral operating portion and for performing high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization, the vessel; and a second accommodating member in which the flexible inserting portion is arranged while at least one of preventing the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with the operating portion and preventing surfaces of portions of the flexible inserting portion from coming into direct contact with each other in a state of having accommodated the operating portion in the first accommodating member, wherein the first accommodating member is separate from the second accommodating member.

44. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 43, wherein the second accommodating member is a cylindrical member having flexibility of which the inner diameter is larger than the outer configuration of the flexible inserting portion and which is accommodated in the first accommodating member in a state of having passed therein the flexible inserting portion.

45. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 43, wherein the second accommodating member is a lid member which can be selectively arranged in a closed state to cover at least a part of the first accommodating

member and in an open state to show the first accommodating member as a whole with respect to the first accommodating member.

46. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, wherein the lid member has a curved wall in order to accommodate the flexible inserting portion with a curved shape.

47. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 46, wherein the lid member has a surface opposing the first accommodating member when the lid member covers the first accommodating member and an opposing surface, and the curved wall is provided on the opposing surface.

48. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, wherein the flexible inserting portion is arranged in the lid member from a distal end of the flexible inserting portion to a portion between the distal end and a proximal end of the flexible inserting portion.

49. (New) The vessel for high-temperature high-pressure steam sterilization according to claim 45, further comprising an outer lid member which covers the lid member arranged in the closed state with respect to the first accommodating member.